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THOMAS R. SUOZZI
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



RICHARD A. ROTANZ
COMMISSIONER

November 1, 2005

Re: Nassau County Office of Emergency Management Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Nassau County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan development process. **A meeting of the Core Planning Group will be held on Monday, November 14, 2005, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management, 100 Carman Avenue, East Meadow, New York.** Please respond to NC-OEM with the name of the representative who will be attending the working session no later than Thursday, November 10, 2005. If you require additional information please contact Terry Winters at 516-573-0636, or at twinters@nassaucountyny.gov.

This will be a working session of the Core Planning Group. At this working session:

- Our Contractors will present an overview of the hazard identification and hazard profile phases of the process.
- Core Planning Group members will provide information about natural hazards and their affects in each member's respective area. This feedback will later be incorporated by our Contractors into the Plan.

Once the plan is finalized by the Core Planning Group, it will be presented to representatives of the towns, villages, cities and key stakeholders at a series of meetings. At this time, a Draft Plan is targeted for release in February 2006. **For municipalities receiving this invitation, NC-OEM would like to extend a reminder that your attendance and participation at meetings is one aspect of what is required if the overall County-wide multi-jurisdictional plan is to 'count', in FEMA's eyes, as your municipality's hazard mitigation plan (for the purposes of compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000).**

In preparation for this working session, we would encourage you to take a few moments to think about natural hazards in your area, critical facilities and key infrastructure that may be at risk, problem areas that you may be aware of, and come prepared to roll up your sleeves and provide as much feedback as you can to our Contractors for incorporation into the Plan. Natural hazards that we will be focusing on are: coastal erosion, wave action, earthquakes, floods, landslides, extreme winds, and severe weather events such as: drought, hurricanes, tornadoes, and winter storms/ice storms.

The remainder of this memorandum provides background information on the purpose and need for the hazard mitigation plan, and your potential role in the planning process. **We look forward to seeing you on November 14th.**

As you are no doubt aware, Nassau County is susceptible to a number of different natural hazards. These natural hazards have the potential to cause property loss, loss of life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety. While an important aspect of emergency management deals with disaster recovery – those actions that a community must take to repair damages and make itself whole in the wake of a natural disaster – an equally important aspect of emergency management involves hazard mitigation. Hazard mitigation measures are efforts taken *before* a disaster happens to lessen the impact that future disasters of that type will have on people and property in the community.

Section 322, Mitigation Planning, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act ("the Stafford Act"), enacted by Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 ("DMA 2000"), provides new and revitalized approaches to mitigation planning.

As of November 1, 2004, in order to qualify for Federal aid for technical assistance and certain types of pre- and post-disaster funding, local governments must have DMA 2000-compliant hazard mitigation plans in place. While Nassau County is preparing a multi-jurisdictional County-wide plan, any jurisdiction that is located within Nassau County who wishes to be recognized by FEMA as being compliant with DMA 2000 must either: (a) participate with the County in the multi-jurisdictional plan development process and formally adopt the final plan, or (b) prepare its own hazard mitigation plan.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 44 Part 201 Mitigation Planning, a "local government" is defined as "any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity."

Why Prepare A Hazard Mitigation Plan?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility to apply for Federal aid for technical assistance and certain types of pre- and post-disaster project funding (i.e., project grants under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP, competitive state-wide after a Federal disaster declaration); FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation competitive program (PDMc, competitive nationwide, annual appropriation)).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads to judicious selection of risk reduction actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to more sustainable and disaster-resistant communities through selecting the most appropriate mitigation measures, based on the knowledge gained in the hazard identification and loss estimation process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds partnerships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes funding priorities before disaster strikes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the safety and economic well-being of constituents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation actions identified during the planning process can reduce the costs of a disaster.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It simply costs too much to address the effects of disasters only after they happen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and federal aid is often insufficient to cover the extent of physical and economic damages resulting from disasters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A surprising amount of damage from hazards can be prevented by taking the time to anticipate where and how they occur.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning can lessen the impact and speed the overall response and recovery processes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard mitigation can be incorporated as an integral component of daily business.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows participants to focus their efforts on the hazard areas most important to them by incorporating the concept of determining and setting priorities for mitigation planning efforts.

Recognizing the risks that natural hazards pose to Nassau County, and the benefits of having a DMA 2000-compliant hazard mitigation plan in place, the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management submitted an application, and was approved for, Fiscal Year 2003 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant monies from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be used to develop a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan for the County. At this time, Nassau County will be preparing a plan that focuses solely on natural hazards. Incorporation of human-caused hazards can be evaluated in future updates of the plan, as it is a "living document" which will be evaluated and updated regularly.

Elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, volunteers of non-profit organizations, citizens, and other stakeholders who choose to participate will be part of our Nassau County Hazard Mitigation Planning Group (the "Planning Group"). The first meeting of the overall Planning Group was held on October 20, 2005. The overall Planning Group is composed of a Core Planning Group and three Area Assessment Teams to ensure that meeting sizes are kept to productive numbers.

The **Core Planning Group** will be responsible for day-to-day plan formulation activities and decision making. Town representatives on the Core Planning Group will be responsible for conducting an outreach program for the municipalities and other stakeholders within their respective boundaries through establishing teams within each of the town's boundaries ("Area Assessment Teams"). Since Nassau County's three towns (Oyster Bay, Hempstead, and North Hempstead) equal the entire footprint of the County, each Area Assessment Team will consist of representatives from the towns, villages and cities as well as key stakeholders within that particular town's boundary.

The eventual success of our Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan will rest on the decisions and directions set by our Planning Group members throughout the plan development process.

Consultants from URS Corporation will be assisting the Planning Group by conducting the analyses necessary to provide us with the information we need to make sound decisions, and help guide us through the necessary steps of the plan development process. However, it is we – the county, towns, villages and cities -- who are responsible for taking those steps. Throughout the process, our consultants will be assisting us in identifying the natural hazards that could affect the County, and evaluating the risks associated with these hazards. The Planning Group, in turn, will be asked to satisfy several Participation Criteria and will be asked to take the lead by including the local community and other stakeholders, assessing the alternatives, and ultimately selecting the course of action to be followed. At the end of the planning process, URS will prepare the Plan text (with feedback from the Planning Group) to document our collective efforts, along with hazard information and findings, in a manner consistent with applicable regulations, criteria, and guidance.

Why Participate in a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Process?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can save money by providing a forum for engaging in partnerships that could provide technical, financial, and/or staff resources in your effort to reduce the effects, and hence the costs, of hazards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller jurisdictions can benefit from the additional resources and expertise that collaboration can bring.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans are practical for addressing issues best dealt with on a larger scale, which do not recognize political boundaries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes advantage of existing planning mechanisms, such as regional planning organizations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates economies of scale and enables pooling of limited resources.

To comply with DMA 2000, it is important to stress that the authority and responsibility to participate in the plan development process and to adopt the final mitigation plan will lie ultimately with each participating jurisdiction. Individual jurisdictions will be responsible for adoption of the plan individually, even though it will be prepared collectively. Each jurisdiction will have to meet certain requirements in order to comply with DMA 2000. If a jurisdiction decides to participate but does not meet the requirements, it will be denied funding approval by FEMA, while other jurisdictions that participated in the same multi-jurisdictional plan can receive approval if they have met all the criteria. Our multi-jurisdictional planning effort is a means of recognizing some economies of scale for all participating; it should not be interpreted as a short-cut approach to participation.

While natural disasters cannot be prevented from occurring, the continued implementation of our hazard mitigation plan over the long-term will gradually, but steadily, lessen the impacts associated with hazard events in our county.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and anticipated participation. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terence Winters

Terence Winters
Director of Emergency Planning